



SENIOR WINTER COMPETITION
- what to expect in 2012 -

PREAMBLE

This booklet has been published to inform members of the changes and improvement that have been made to the 2012 senior winter competition. It will also assist Clubs in understanding the new procedures that will be applied with regards to entering teams in the senior winter competition.

At the conclusion of the 2010 senior competition, Hockey ACT members were invited to participate in an online survey. The Competitions Committee used information generated from the survey to determine how the senior competition should be changed and improved for the future.

The Competition Committee decided the best way to address several issues raised in the survey and improve the senior competition was to look at restructuring the competition. After considerable research and discussion with other sporting organisations, both locally and interstate, a proposal was developed and distributed to Clubs as a 'discussion paper'. Input and comments were obtained from Clubs and a forum was held to discuss specific details regarding the new competition structure. The proposal was approved at the forum, with the new competition structure to take effect in 2012.

A competition restructure will result in significant improvements to our current competitions and these are listed and explained in more detail below. It also ensures that Hockey in the ACT will not be left behind as other sports continue to evolve and change.

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WHAT WILL THE SENIOR COMPETITION LOOK LIKE IN 2012?

Senior competition grades will be renamed and fall under three 'tiers' of competition. New bylaws will be developed to meet the specific needs of each tier. Below are the new competition grades:

<i>Elite tier</i>	-Capital League (CL) -Capital League Reserves (CLR)
<i>Competitive tier</i>	-State League 1(SL1) -State League 2(SL2) -State League 3(SL4) -State League 4, 5, 6 to be determined*
<i>Social tier</i>	-Canberra Cup – men (grass) -Canberra Cup – women (grass) -Canberra Cup (men's midweek)

	GRADE / IDEAL MAXIMUM NUMBER OF TEAMS								
MEN	CL up to 8 teams	CLR up to 10 teams	SL1 up to 10 teams	SL2 up to 10 teams	SL3 up to 10 teams	SL4 up to 10 teams	SL5 up to 10 teams	CC MIDWEEK up to 10 teams	CC GRASS 10 teams up to 10 teams
WOMEN	CL up to 8 teams	CLR up to 10 teams	SL1 up to 10 teams	SL2 up to 10 teams	SL3 up to 10 teams	SL4 up to 10 teams	SL5 up to 10 teams	CC GRASS 10 teams up to 10 teams	

-Capital League, State League and Canberra Cup are suggested titles only and may change.

*the number of State Leagues will depend on the number of teams that nominate to participate in 2012.

Requirements and restrictions

Elite tier

- Clubs are limited to one team per grade, to avoid too great a concentration of elite players in just a few clubs.
- Current senior representative players would be expected to participate in this tier, not in the lower tiers.
- Established elite clubs should be able to field one team in both elite grades backed up by teams in the higher grades of the competitive tier.
- Developing elite clubs should be able to field a team in the elite reserve grade, preferably backed up by a competitive team in the top grade of the competitive tier.
- Aspiring elite clubs should be represented by competitive teams in the top two grades of the competitive tier.
- Entry to the elite grades would be by invitation, based on previous year's results and consultation with clubs about their club structure and development plans.

Competitive

- Clubs would be permitted to enter two teams per grade in this tier.
- Entry to particular grades would be by invitation, based on previous year's results and communication between the Hockey ACT Competitions Committee and clubs, regarding club structure and development plans.

Social

- very few restrictions on player movements would be applied
- Clubs would be permitted to enter as many teams as they want in this tier in any grade.
- Entry would be by nomination from clubs, as per the current system.

*Hockey ACT has not yet decided on names for our new competitions and would appreciate **suggestions from the Hockey community**.
If you have a suggestion please email Peter Bullock,
Hockey ACT Competitions Coordinator – competitions@hockeyact.org.au*

WHAT BENEFITS ARE THERE TO RESTRUCTURING THE COMPETITION?

Quality draws

A significant percentage of survey comments noted the quality of the draws, number of team byes and potential for draws to be 'biased'. Changing the structure of the competition allows Hockey ACT to address these concerns and other issues impacting on quality draw development.

- Under the 2010 competition structure, developing the draw is a very lengthy and complicated process, and it is repeated every year. In past years it has resulted in the draw not being available within timeframes acceptable to our members. Under the new structure a draw template can be developed which we can 'tweak' each season to fit in with events such as Club Days, National Championships, Australian Hockey League or international matches.
- Setting a specific number of teams in each division will allow all teams within each division to play each other the same number of times. When this does not occur there is potential for some teams to play the 'top team/s' (or the bottom teams) more or less than the other teams in their grade, resulting in the draw being unintentionally biased towards particular teams.
- Currently, teams can play anywhere from 18 to 22 games, depending on how many teams, byes and grade byes are in the division. Under the new structure, there is a more even spread in terms of the number of games played across the grades. This will address concerns around the perceived inequity of the grades which include fewer games than in other grades.

Competitive competitions

Setting a specific number of teams in each division will provide for a stronger and more even competition within the grade which will be more enjoyable for players and spectators and provide stronger development opportunities for players. When there are a lot of teams in a grade there is potential for a significant variation in the ability of teams and for some teams to experience big wins or losses. This impacts significantly on players and spectators enjoying their hockey.

Hockey ACT will determine which Clubs will participate in each grade based on results from previous season/s and information Clubs 'submit' to the Competitions Committee. Teams at the top of the ladder at the conclusion of the season may be invited to participate in the next highest grade and teams towards the bottom of the ladder may be invited to participate in the next lowest competition. In a nut-shell:

1. Clubs with teams that play in a grand final, or are minor premiers will be invited to enter teams in the next higher grade, if suitable vacancies arise. The losing preliminary final team may also be invited should a suitable vacancy arise.
2. Clubs with teams (other than those clubs invited to the next higher grade) who achieved 75% of available points would be guaranteed an invitation to participate in that grade next year (if the club still continues to fulfil all the criteria necessary for inclusion in that grade).
3. Clubs with teams that fail to win 25% of the competition points may be invited to enter a team in the next lowest grade.
4. Other clubs may still be invited to participate in any given grade, depending on the issues outlined above (i.e. grade structure and club structure).
5. In advance of the invitations being released aspiring clubs would be welcome to provide a **submission** for receiving invitation/s they wouldn't otherwise expect to receive.

More information on communication with Clubs, the submission process, opportunity for promotion and candidates for relegation is explained in more detail below.

Development pathways

Another benefit of having a consistent number of teams in our competitions is that it provides a meaningful pathway and development within each of the competitions. More competitive matches throughout the season will contribute to a more effective development opportunity for players.

Club structure

The revised structure supports a strong 'Club' structure particularly for those aspiring to and competing in the Capital League competitions. Our current competition structure allows Clubs to nominate in whichever grade they want and not necessarily address 'gaps' in terms of their player development. Clubs should be expected to maintain their place in the top grades by being competitive but also by having teams under the top grades to provide support when necessary. The proposed structure will require Clubs to have teams of a suitable standard to support and strengthen their Capital League teams.

There will be Clubs that do not want to strive to enter teams in the top grades. Our competition must still cater for Clubs of this structure and provide them with meaningful hockey experiences. The new structure provides positive, competitive, hockey opportunities for these clubs in the State Leagues and Canberra Cup competitions.

Promoting our competitions

Under the revised structure, our elite competition and feeder competition are clearly identified (Capital League). Giving them a unique title provides them with a level of status and prestige within the Hockey ACT and wider communities.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE NEW COMPETITION

Who determines which Clubs participate in each grade?

Eventually, the club consultations, invitations and nominations will be conducted as a routine process by the Senior Competition Committee (SCC) and the office, but this year, whilst the restructure is implemented, the process will be managed by the Competitions Committee (CC) and the office in consultation with the SCC.

How will they determine which Clubs participate in each grade?

Decisions regarding which teams play in each grade will be based on information submitted by Clubs to the Competitions Committee and results from the previous season.

Will new rules be created for the new competition structure?

New bylaws will be created that will reflect the particular needs of the 'tiers' of competition and links between the tiers. A draft will be available to Clubs a month prior to the start of the competition. The rules will clearly outline the process for entering teams into the competition as well as all other relevant competition information (e.g. registering players, clearances, transfers, etc).

How does a team get promoted to a higher grade?

Whenever there are suitable vacancies in a higher grade (examples: a bye, fewer teams than considered optimal; and/or one or more under-performing teams that may not get invited back), clubs may aspire to have one of their teams promoted.

Invitations to a grade may also be offered to either of the two grand finals teams from the next highest grade, and also possibly the losing preliminary final team (which would include the minor premiers in the unlikely event they did not play in the grand final).

Consultations may be held with clubs that make a submission requesting promotion (unless the submission is going to be accepted without discussion) and with any other club that may end up receiving an invitation to promote a team.

When might a team be demoted to a lower grade?

A team that fails to win 25% of the available competition points may become a candidate for demotion to a lower grade.

Clubs may still be invited to enter teams in a grade, even where those teams do not meet the above requirement, after consideration of other issues such as optimal grade structure and club structure.

Any club that cannot reasonably expect to be offered invitations to enter the same teams as the previous season will be offered an opportunity for consultation with the Competitions Committee, regardless of whether or not they choose to make a submission. This will occur in December prior to the Clubs being invited to enter teams in particular grades.

Will a team that finished in the ‘middle’ of a grade be a candidate for promotion/demotion?

Teams not being considered for promotion, but which had achieved at least a reasonable percentage of the available competition points in the season just finished would be guaranteed a invitation to compete in the same grade next year, assuming they continue to meet all the other criteria for inclusion in the grade.

Clubs are invited to provide a Club Submission. What information needs to be provided in a submission and how is it submitted?

The submission should include any information the club believe supports their case.

- how the club is tracking against its club development or strategic plan (attach copies of the plans)
- player roster information
- coaching personnel
- changes/improvements the club is making in the future
- Club structure
- the team’s development over the last few years and any other relevant information.

The more comprehensive the submission is the better. It needs to be emailed to the Hockey ACT Competitions Coordinator by 31 November 2011 at competitions@hockeyact.org.au .

Will clubs get the opportunity to discuss their submission and their concerns regarding the promotion and demotion of teams?

As explained above clubs, have the opportunity to provide a submission to the Competitions Committee. If their submissions are not likely to be successful, they will also be given the chance to discuss the details before the invitations are issued (i.e. there will be a guaranteed opportunity for private consultation with affected clubs).

The CC does not want to dictate to clubs how they should conduct their affairs, but does want to encourage club structures that allow the progression of good young and developing players, so that these players can eventually make the elite grades. Hockey ACT wants the best possible players participating in the elite grades.

The Competitions Committee may also choose to ‘consult’ with clubs with teams that may be vulnerable to being demoted in the future, so that they can take steps over the next 12 months to improve their performance and avoid possible demotion to a lower grade.

After Clubs have provided submissions and discussed their circumstances with the Competitions Committee, what happens?

After club consultations, invitations to clubs to nominate teams will be issued. Clubs that are happy to nominate their invited teams will be guaranteed that those nominations will be accepted. Clubs

may still nominate for grades to which they have not been invited and these additional nominations will be accommodated if there are suitable vacancies in the grades concerned (i.e. other clubs have not nominated some of their invited teams). There will be a second round of club consultations for any clubs whose nominations have not been accepted. These consultations will be completed, nominations will be finalised and any disaffected clubs will be allowed their usual appeal rights (see the current Senior Competition By-laws) in time for the draw to be done in a timely fashion.

Please outline the timeframes for submissions, invitations and consultation.

- 31 November – Club submission to the Competitions Committee is due
- 1 December – the Competitions Committee complete an analysis of the performance of teams in the 2011 season for the purpose of determining which teams should be participate in which grades of the competition.
- 31 December – the Competitions Committee considers submissions and consults with Clubs that have provided submissions
- 31 December – invitations sent to Clubs inviting them to nominate to enter teams in particular grades.
- 15 February 2012 – club complete nomination process by paying fees and providing appropriate paperwork
- 1 March – a second round of consultation will be conducted between clubs that do not accept the invitation to nominate according to the invitation from Hockey ACT.
- 1 March – draft bylaws published; bylaws will be finalised prior to the start of the 2012 competition
- 5 March – draft competition structure published.

When does the 2012 senior season commence and conclude?

Round 1 kick off the week starting 26 March and concludes with Round 21 the week starting 27 Aug. A three week finals series commences the week starting 3 September and concludes with grand finals the week starting 17 September. (Games will not be played over the Easter break or the Queen's Birthday weekend).

What is the Canberra Premier League?

The men's and women's Canberra Premier League will provide an exciting competition for high performance players and those striving to be on the high performance pathway. It will run over 7 weeks and be based on a player draft system.

Games are played on a Friday evening, commencing 23 March and concluding 4 May.

For more information please contact you club President (who has been sent more detailed information) or email [Ben Bishop](#), the Hockey ACT NTC Head Coach.

WHERE DO I GET MORE INFORMATION ON THE NEW COMPETITION STRUCTURE?

For information specific to your Club and team contact your Club President or appropriate senior club delegate.

For broader information, that is not Club specific, contact the Hockey ACT General Manager (Kathy Mumberson – manager@hockeyact.org.au) or Hockey ACT Competitions Coordinator (Peter Bullock – competitions@hockeyact.org.au).